1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

and singing, playing and listening to music, eating festively, drinking rice beer, and implicitly sexual activity; in practice, these are the activities characteristic of a Santal festival. When a traditional and typically uneducated Santal meets another from a distant region, one of the first questions asked will be, "How is pleasure in your region?" The reply will focus on the activities mentioned above. Indeed, the only occasion in which I observed a fully sober Santal male adult burst into tears was during such a festive event. When I asked the old man why he was weeping at such a time, he replied, "The sounds of the drum remind me of the pleasure of my youth and of my deceased wife who shared in my pleasure." It will be recalled that it was rice beer which enabled the propagation of the Santal to proceed in the beginning of things, and if there is one word which is more frequently uttered than any other, more frequent even than the sound of festive drums, it is the cry of "*haṇḍi, haṇḍi haṇḍi*" (rice beer; from *handia*, Hindi = an earthenware container). As the Santal sing:

> Oh "flower friend"*
> I am thirsty and I am hungry;
> But hearing the sound of the drums under the canopy†
> My thirst and hunger are banished.

The Santal pleasure complex is of primary importance in considering recent economic and political events, but here the concern is with "pleasure" as a shared understanding serving the solidarity of the Santal. As the Santal think of it, "pleasure"

* A "flower friend" or *phul* (as in Hindi *phul* = flower) is a formally celebrated ritual friendship.

† The "canopy" or *chamda* is utilized in wedding ceremonies to cover the area in which the ceremony takes place.

2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

the patients recover, they entertain the medicine givers. Since the time of the Santal rebellion they are not helping each other so much. However much they may have, some people are so stingy, they will absolutely not give anything, they utterly refuse to help. But no one likes such heartless people, and if they themselves fall into difficulties, no one will look at them; they rather say: Thakur is punishing this man in retribution. 476 [178]

Paddy and rice, salt and oil, money they also lend each other without any interest, but not for a long time. If they take this for a long time, we call it a debt, and in this case interest has to be paid. For paddy to be used as food 50 pct. interest, for paddy for seed 100 pct. interest, and for money 25 pct. interest has to be paid. 426

h. Working in company with others.

The Santals, men and women, very much like to work in company with others. When men go to the forest or to some hill to cut wood for a plough, a plough-beam, a yoke, rafters, firewood, posts, roof-beams, cross-beams, and so on, then they go in company. To enter a forest alone is very dangerous, and when you have companions, the work is not so strenuous. Also when going to the landlord or to a money-lender, they help each other, and at harvest time they make their threshing-floors together at the same place, in order that they may not be alone at night, and the work also goes easily in this way. Cattle-herd boys mostly herd in company, three or four of them together; by turns they drive the cattle round about, and when there is any danger, they help each other. The women also, when they go to draw water, or go to pluck vegetables and bring leaves, or when they go to a market or a shop to sell or buy, then they go in company with others. 476

i. Looking people up for a talk.

When they have no work the village people go and look each other up a good deal. The men go about on the pretext of asking for lime and tobacco; they chew the tobacco, and also talk together about their health and circumstances and so on. In the evening they come together at the Manjhi than; they start some humorous conversation, they jest together and talk together without restraint about a thousand matters, to ease their mind. The women also visit each other on the pretext of asking for fire or something; but they mostly have their deliberations at the place where they draw water. There they tell each other their troubles and joys and anything happening in the village. But some women do not, like the men, talk what is blameless; their words may be aggravating, and therefore very noisy quarrels sometimes arise. 521 574 [578]

j. Concerning relationship.

The Santals have really two kinds of relationship, relationship by birth and relationship brought about by marriage. But besides these two kinds the Santals arrange village relationship without there being any real relationship. Some people arrange a relationship in 602

St Culthaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

CHAPTER 4

DANCING, MUSIC AND POETRY

THE word *ṛaska*, meaning "pleasure", is often on the lips of the Santals, and it is dear to their hearts. They turn from their difficulties and sorrows to find solace in one or other of the many ways in which they can experience *ṛaska*. Among these dancing is one of the most important. Their word for dancing is the same as that used for the play of children—*enec'*—and dancing is indeed the play of the tribe. In every village there is a dancing floor, an open space that is well cared for. At festival times it is swept and freshly plastered with cowdung by young unmarried girls, and when it is not in use for dancing it is the place where the young men gather in the evenings to discuss their affairs and interests.

Some of the dances are connected with particular festivals, and they are performed only at those times or during the whole of the month in which the festival takes place. There are other dances that are suitable at any time during the year. Some are dances for women alone and others for men alone, while in a few both men and women dance. The chief element of variety is introduced by means of varying the rhythm; to the casual observer most of the dances look the same. A group of men or of women dance together, forming a line with their arms linked, stepping sideways or forward and then backward, keeping time to the beating accompaniment of the drums, moving either in a circle or from one side of the dancing-floor to the other, and from time to time breaking out into song. Whenever there is an occasion for rejoicing there will be dancing. It is much in evidence during the celebrations and ceremonies after the birth of a child or at his fuller reception into the tribe, and again during marriage festivities. The general type of dance on all these occasions is known as *doṅ*, which has within it many variations. At these times it is the women who do the dancing, while the men furnish an accompaniment with drums and flutes, and many of the songs refer directly to the purpose for which the folk have gathered together. During marriage ceremonies the *bapla*, or type of dance specifically associated with marriages, is also in evidence. The *doṅger* is the dance of the men on the night of the annual hunt. It is a wild type of dance, when there is much leaping in the air. Two of the young men stripped of clothing dance about in front of the lines, and the